32. (Twice Amended) A conferencing method comprising:

receiving a plurality of data streams from a corresponding plurality of conference participants;

selecting a subset of the plurality of data streams, wherein the selected subset of audio data streams includes streams of different data types;

routing the selected subset of the plurality of audio data streams to decoder modules based on their data types;

rendering the selected subset of data streams;

determining whether one or more of the first and second data streams is associated with an inactive conference participant; and

substituting a third data stream from a third conference participant, for at least the one of the first and second data streams determined to be associated with the inactive conference participant.

33. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 32, wherein the selected subset of data streams includes a first audio data stream formatted according to a first protocol and a second audio data stream formatted according to a second protocol.

34. (Amended) The method of claim 32, wherein the selected subset of data streams includes a first video data stream formatted according to a first protocol and a second video data stream formatted according to a second protocol.

REMARKS

All of the rejections are primarily based on the Smith patent. The Office action admits that the Smith Patent does not teach *"two decoder modules for decoding two particular types of the data streams."* (Page two of the Office action). However, the Office action relies on the Clapp patent for teaching two or more decoder modules for handling two

or more types of data. From our understanding of the Office action, this view of Clapp is based on a misunderstanding.

Clapp describes a connection in which there is only a single media stream flowing to a client machine. The patent is aimed at a feature in which the receiver is able to dynamically adapt to receiving and processing streams conforming to different sub-standards of the H.320 standard (See Col. 9, lines 47-60). The patent does not describe or teach contemporaneously receiving streams conforming to different standards.

The Office action confuses the teachings in the Clapp patent describing its ability to dynamically adjust to and process different ones of the H.320 sub-standards with an ability to simultaneously process streams of different data types. The confusion is compounded by the illustration in Fig. 5 of the Clapp patent of two processors for each of audio and video signals. But one of the processors is for "local" signals and the other is for "remote" signals. In this regard, only one of the processors handles video or audio streams from remote network sources.

At best, Clapp only suggests providing a second processor in Smith for handling local video or audio signals. When properly understood, it does not suggest modifying Smith to include *"two or more decoder modules for handling and decoding two or more types of the data streams"* as required by claim 1 or routing streams to different decoders based on the data types of the streams as required by independent claims 18, 21, 24 and 25.

The remaining independent claims 26, 29 and 32 have been amended to include either the means for or the step of routing the streams to decoders based on their data type. Dependent claims 27 and 30 have been canceled because their features are incorporated by this amendment into their respective independent claims 26 and 29.
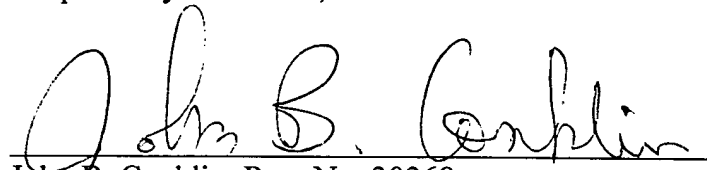
In re Appln. of VEGA-GARCIA et al.
Application No. 09/157,884

Conclusion

The application is considered in good and proper form for allowance, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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